DRUG EDUCATION & MANAGEMENT POLICY
FOR THE
ST JOHN THE APOSTLE
CATHOLIC SCHOOL
NARRAWEENA

March 2008
PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to provide direction to St John the Apostle Catholic School Narraweena for drug education, the management of drug related incidents, and the development or review of school drug policies.

Catholic schools in the Diocese of Broken Bay exist to educate and form students in Catholic discipleship: offering them experiences of following Jesus as members of the Catholic community. They operate within a comprehensive, integrated God-centred view of reality, the Catholic worldview. In their education and formation of young people, Catholic schools actively promote the Catholic worldview and its understanding of creation. The Catholic worldview affirms every individual person as made in the image of God (Gen 1:27) and encourages all to exercise stewardship of that creation. Catholic schools seek to transform the individual through sharing of the Catholic vision and story, and offering the student opportunities to apply that worldview to all aspects of school life, and life outside of school.

Life and physical health are precious gifts entrusted to people by God, and the body is the temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 5:19). Accordingly the Diocesan Schools Board prohibits all unsanctioned drug use on the school property or at school events. Communities need to take strategic action to prevent drug experimentation and use by students. They must be able to respond appropriately to the harm that may arise, basing all intervention on the values of the Gospel.

POLICY FRAMEWORK

The Catholic Schools Office and St John the Apostle Catholic School Narraweena in the Diocese of Broken Bay are committed to the development of their learning and work environment as faith and educational communities which:

• take as their foundation the person and gospel of Jesus Christ;
• educate and form students in Catholic Discipleship;
• integrate faith with life and contemporary culture;
• foster the dignity and development of each person.

A Whole School Approach to Drug Education

A whole school approach to managing drug related issues should focus on:

• promotion of a positive, hope-filled understanding of the human person, graced by God with free will, capable of taking moral responsibility for actions and guided by a sense of meaning and purpose in life;
• prevention through drug education and safe and supportive school environments; and
• intervention through appropriate procedures for dealing with drug related incidents at school and support for students and families who may be involved. Drug issues should be approached within the context of the pastoral care policy and the school’s student management policy. These provide a systematic and practical framework within which schools can manage drug related issues.

The three focus areas of a whole school approach to pastoral care, enabling schools to develop, implement and review effective preventative drug education programs and practices for managing drug related incidents, is summarised below.
Curriculum, Teaching and Learning
Whilst preventative drug education is provided within the Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE) syllabus, planning needs to occur across the whole school curriculum. The curriculum refers to both the formal teaching and learning program in the school and the informal curriculum component. Drug education provides students with an opportunity to gain knowledge and skills and to develop chosen attitudes and values that enable them to make informed decisions relating to drug use.

Drug education programs should:
• provide clear information on and the advocacy of Catholic Church teaching;
• develop student self-esteem, sense of belonging, decision-making skills and resilience;
• understand a harm minimisation approach which focuses on messages of abstinence when dealing with all forms of drug use with the exception of medication, and
• increase student awareness and understanding of the consequences of drug use and their ability to respond in situations of risk.

School Organisation, Ethos and Environment
A positive school climate is fundamental to providing an environment where students’ physical, social, emotional and spiritual needs are met. Such a climate in a Catholic school promotes shared spiritual values and beliefs, justice and compassion, belonging and connectedness, and success at school.

A positive school climate will be enhanced by:
• an inclusive school environment in which pastoral care programs build a sense of achievement and belonging for all students and provide monitoring and support for students at risk;
• incorporating policy and procedures for illicit and other unsanctioned drug use into the school’s student management policy:
  - clear rules about drugs in school and procedures to address drug related incidents being made known to students, parents and school staff;
  - procedures that may need to encompass a range of incidents such as smoking at school, drinking on a school excursion and possession, use or distribution of illicit drugs at school.

Partnerships and Services
Drug use is an issue for the whole community. Schools need to work collaboratively with parents, the church, the Catholic Schools Office and community agencies, to maximise their effectiveness in preventative drug education and practices for managing drug related incidents.

Schools have a significant role to play in providing information to parents about drug related issues through strategies such as parent information forums, a school counsellor forum and school newsletters. The school and community cannot address the issue of student drug use without parental support. It is essential that the messages for positive health behaviours are consistent at school and at home. The parent/guardian should:

• be informed about, participate in the development of and actively support the school drug education and management policy;
• be prepared to attend a drug education program for parents to assist them to better deal with the issue of young people and drug use;
• acknowledge that the school alone cannot solve or prevent problems and therefore needs parental support.

It is essential for schools to establish meaningful links with community agencies, especially the local area health services, the Catholic Schools Office and the NSW Police Service to strengthen the schools’ ability to manage and respond to drug related issues. Students involved in drug related issues may need to be referred to outside agencies for professional assessment or treatment. The school can play a critical role in referring students and their families to those agencies qualified to provide the necessary support and advice. During a student’s treatment, the school can offer support and assist in planning for a return to school life.

**POLICY CONTENT**

**Definition**
“A drug is any substance which, when taken into the body, alters its physical or psychological function excluding food, water or air.”

*World Health Organisation*

**Illicit (or Illegal) Drugs**
Illicit substances are not permitted on the school premises or at school sanctioned events. The following drugs are illicit in NSW: cannabis, hallucinogens (LSD, mescaline, ketamine), heroin, cocaine, ecstasy and amphetamines.
Restricted Legal Drugs

Tobacco
The sale of tobacco products to people under the age of 18 is prohibited. No tobacco usage is permitted within school grounds or at school sanctioned events. Staff, parents, visitors and community members are required to refrain from its use on school premises.

Alcohol
Alcohol must not be consumed on or brought to school premises during school hours.

If alcohol is served at any school function or within the school outside school hours, prior permission must be obtained from the principal. Any use of alcohol is subject to the laws and regulations regarding the supply, serving and consumption of alcohol.

Legal Drugs and Substances

Dispensing Medication
Arising from the duty of care that schools owe to their students, there will be occasions when the administration of medication is necessary to support students during the course of a normal school day or outside of normal school hours. Once it has been established that a student has a need for medication, it is important that school personnel authorised to administer medication do so in accordance with the Diocesan Schools System Occupational Health and Safety Policy and the Guidelines for Administering Medication in Schools.

Inhalants (Volatile Substances)
Volatile substances are compounds that give off vapours and fumes at room temperature. Volatile substances are known as solvents and inhalants. They are not classified as a drug. Research suggests that teaching about inhalants as drugs is inappropriate; rather, they should be referred to as ‘poisons’. Inhaling volatile substances is not illegal but can cause serious harm and their use should be taken seriously because of the potential dangers to those involved. They include butane gas, aerosol sprays, petrol, glue, correction fluids, paint thinners, and cartridge bulbs for whipped cream dispensers. The Principal must ensure that cleaning staff are responsible for the correct storage of all cleaning substances.

Responsibilities for Individual Schools
The Principal is responsible for the implementation of the school’s drug education and management policy and will take appropriate steps to ensure that the school community is regularly made aware of the policy and procedures that are in place. Principals have a responsibility to ensure that all staff members have a copy of or easy access to the Drug Education and Management Policy and related documentation.

This policy establishes the framework for educating and managing drug related issues within the diocesan school system. Specifically, each school should:
- implement this Drug Education and Management Policy and adopt the procedures as outlined in the Guidelines for Managing Drug Related Incidents in Schools for the diocesan schools system;
- guide all teachers and parents of the school and wider community in their responsibilities as drug educators;
• develop, implement and monitor a school-based drug education program which is compliant with PDHPE syllabus requirements. St John’s uses the support of the Life Education Van as a resource to educate children Kindergarten to Year 6 appropriately in this area;
• respond to any drug related incident in ways that embody pastoral care principles;
• involve parents and the community in the drug education program;
• implement the Principles for Drug Education in Schools (Appendix 6: Guidelines for the Management of Drug Related Incidents in Schools) when planning the drug education curriculum;
• advise students, parents and staff of school rules, consequences and procedures for responding to unsanctioned drug use or drug-related incidents;
• implement the Diocesan Schools System Occupational Health and Safety Policy and the Guidelines for Administering Medication in Schools;
• identify specific support services/networks available to students, parents and staff;
• monitor and support students at risk;
• ensure the ongoing professional development of all staff;
• establish ongoing processes for staff, parents and students to gain an understanding and ownership of the policy;
• adopt the sample School Drug Education and Management Policy or review the existing school policy;
• regularly monitor and evaluate the school’s drug education and management policy;
• seek approval of the Director of Schools concerning any variations to the Drug Education and Management Policy for the Diocesan Schools System.

Responsibilities of the Catholic Schools Office
The Catholic Schools Office will provide materials, professional development and support services to assist school communities with the development and implementation of drug policies and procedures.

RELATED LEGISLATION, POLICIES AND GUIDELINES

• Broken Bay Diocesan Schools System:
  ▸ Handbook for Diocesan Systemic Schools
  ▸ First Aid Policy
  ▸ Guidelines for the Management of Drug Related Incidents in Schools
  ▸ Guidelines for Administering Medication in Schools
  ▸ Occupational Health and Safety Policy
  ▸ Pastoral Care Policy
  ▸ No Smoking Policy
• Drug Misuse and Trafficking Act 1985 (NSW)
• Customs Act 1901 (Cth)
• Poisons and Therapeutic Goods Act 1966 (NSW)
• Liquor Act 1982 (NSW)
• Summary Offences Act 1988 (NSW)
• Public Health Act 1991 (NSW)
• Police Act 1990 (NSW)
• Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW)
• Crimes Act 1901 (NSW)
• Education Act 1990 (NSW)
• Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998 (NSW)
• Freedom of Information Act 1989 (NSW)
• Privacy Act 1988 (Cth)
• NSW Department of Education and Training Privacy Code of Practice
• NSW Police Privacy Code of Practice
• Children (Criminal Proceedings) Act 1989 (NSW)
• Websites:
  ▶ www.adf.org.au – Australian Drug Foundation (ADF)
  ▶ www.dgr.nsw.gov.au – NSW Department of Gaming and Racing

Policy Review
This policy will be reviewed within one year of its date of adoption.

Policy Dates
Date of completion of formulation and adoption: November 2004
Date of effective implementation: September 2011
Date of next review: September 2016

Mark Bateman - Principal (2015)